

## HEAD LICE POLICY

- Primary responsibility for the control of head lice lies with individuals, families and public health experts. However, schools can assist with controlling and preventing head lice.
- When a student is identified with live head lice, schools must provide the student with a note to take home to inform their parent/carer that their child has head lice and exclude the student from school until after treatment has commenced.
- Principals must alert parents or carers of an infestation and use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community.
- Schools are not required to conduct visual head lice checks but in the event that they decide to, parental consent is required if the student is physically examined.

### Schools control the spread of head lice in 2 ways:

1. exclusion from school
2. visual head lice checks in schools (this is done by EPS staff if noticed)

### Exclusion from school

When a student is identified with live head lice schools must:

- At the end of the school day, provide the student with a [note to take home](#) to inform their parent/carer that their child may have head lice.
- Exclude the student from school until the day after treatment has commenced, as set out in the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019, School Exclusion Table — refer to the health.vic website: [School Exclusion Table](#).

Note 1: the principal has the overall responsibility to exclude a student from school

Note 2: the presence of eggs in the hair is not a cause for exclusion (only live head lice)

Note 3: there is no requirement for a general practitioner or local council to issue a clearance certificate in order for the child to return to school

Principals must:

- [alert parents or carers of an infestation](#), particularly the parents of other students in the same class as the affected child or children
- use discretion to avoid identifying individuals when informing the school community about an infestation

Note: the Department of Health and Human Services indicates there are likely to be cases of head lice in most schools at any given time, so it is not advocated that the principal informs the whole school community each time head lice are detected.

### Prevention of head lice in schools

Although the responsibility for detecting and treating head lice rests with parents, it is important that practical advice and support be available.

Schools are encouraged to work collaboratively with parents and the broader school community to implement practices and procedures to prevent and minimise the impact of head lice outbreaks.

**Strategies that schools can implement to prevent the transmission of head lice are listed below:**

### Leadership and commitment

It is considered best practice to:

- take a whole school approach to prevention of head lice, based on evidence-based information from the Department of Health and Human Services, refer to the Resources tab
- ensure the whole school community is aware of and understands this policy

### Healthy physical environment

Head lice do not live or breed on furniture, carpets, clothes or soft toys and cannot be spread through sharing items of clothing, for example, hats.

However, it is best practice for schools to:

- encourage parents to tie their child's hair back if it is long; and
- implement learning activities that minimise head-to-head contact during head lice outbreaks

### Healthy culture

Schools must:

- exercise sensitivity towards this issue, maintain student confidentiality and help reduce stigma (for example, provide a letter to all students involved in inspections, not just those found to have head lice)
- maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice

### Support staff and educators

It is best practice to:

- consider families, students and staff as key partners in developing and supporting lice prevention initiatives
- provide general information regarding head lice in the school prospectus, school newsletter or on the school website for parent reference

### Parent or carer detection and treatment responsibilities

Parents and carers have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice.

Responsibilities include:

- not sending their children to school with untreated head lice
- using safe treatment practices which do not place their child's health at risk
- regularly checking for lice or eggs in the hair of their child and other household members
- notifying the school if their child is affected and when treatment commenced

### Head lice

Pediculosis or 'head lice' are small, wingless insects that live, breed and feed on the human scalp. They cannot transmit any infectious diseases. Direct contact is required for transmission from person to person, where head lice crawl from head to head.

# HEAD LICE CHECK REPORT SHEET

Your child was checked today by teaching/ES staff at school for the presence of head lice. This was a:

- Visual Check (observation without physical contact)

The results of the check are:

- No lice or eggs detected.
- Dead eggs were found.
- Live eggs were found.
- Live lice were found.

Therefore the following action is required:-

- No action required.
- Child's hair must be treated with a method that has killed or removed live lice before the child is returned to school.

**Please Note:** All children who are found to have live eggs will be re-checked by trained staff soon after returning to school to ensure the infestation has been effectively treated.

Regards

Julie Ladd  
Principal

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## HEAD LICE TREATMENT REPLY SLIP

If your child has been detected with live lice, this reply slip must be returned to school at the same time that your child returns.

- I have treated my child's head in a manner that has killed or removed the live lice.
- I would like to be shown how the Dept of Health and Human Services recommends removal of eggs and lice using hair conditioner and a fine toothed comb.

Child's Name:..... Parent Signature:.....